

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

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Shooting Suspect Linked to Ex-Agent's Farm

This article continues an investigation by The Times into the transfer abroad of advanced technology, military equipment and expertise by former United States intelligence agents and military personnel.

Key issues involve Federal control over such transfers, how they were made and the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in the activities of Edwin P. Wilson, a former agent, who is now a fugitive living in Libya. Mr. Wilson and another former agent were indicted in 1980 on charges of exporting explosives to Libya to help train terrorists. Other former C.I.A. employees have business ties to Mr. Wilson.

Previous articles have reported on an attempt by Mr. Wilson to sell restricted American computer technology to the Soviet Union, Mr. Wilson's use of Green Beret troops to train terrorists in Libya, evidence that investigators say links Mr. Wilson to the suspect in the attempted murder of a Libyan student in Colorado, allegations that a company controlled by Mr. Wilson bribed a former Federal official, and efforts by a small California company to sell sophisticated technology abroad.

Last week, it was reported that, according to associates of Mr. Wilson, American pilots and mechanics that he recruited are flying and maintaining planes for the Libyan Air Force.

This article is based on reporting by Philip Taubman and Jeff Gerth and was written by Mr. Taubman.

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Oct. 24—The man accused of attempting to assassinate a Libyan student in Colorado last year found sanctuary four months later at an isolated English farm owned by Edwin P. Wilson, a former American intelligence agent who is now a fugitive in Libya, according to neighbors and local merchants in England.

The accused assassin, Eugene A. Tafoya, lived in a bungalow at Broxmead Farm, about 35 miles south of London, for three weeks in February, the neighbors and merchants said. They said he had been escorted to the farm by a business associate of Mr. Wilson.

The neighbors said they did not learn until earlier this month that Mr. Tafoya faced criminal charges. He is currently being held in Fort Collins, Colo., pending trial on state charges.

The neighbors and merchants, who asked not to be named, said they had met Mr. Tafoya in the course of business while he was at the farm and had also met other Wilson associates who stayed at the properties. The neighbors were shown photographs of Mr. Tafoya and confirmed that he was the man who had visited the farm for three weeks.

Federal investigators looking into the attempted assassination said in July that they had found evidence, including bank and telephone records, that linked Mr. Tafoya to Mr. Wilson. On the basis of that evidence, investigators said they believed that Mr. Wilson might have been responsible for arranging the Oct. 14, 1980, attack against the Libyan student, Faisal Zagallai, an outspoken critic of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the leader of Libya.

Federal investigators said this week that they were unaware that Mr. Tafoya lived on Mr. Wilson's farm last winter. They said that the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Scotland Yard, which had discovered the existence of the farm in March, had kept it under surveillance since then in the hope that Mr. Wilson might go there himself.

However, neighbors said they were never questioned by any American or British authorities about the farm or Mr. Tafoya. Mr. Tafoya's telephone records, according to Federal investigators, contained numerous calls earlier this year to a telephone number that proved to be the number of the phone in the bungalow. Justice Department officials declined to comment on why investigators, despite the telephone records, had not attempted to see if Mr. Tafoya ever visited the farm.

At the time Mr. Tafoya was at the farm, he was not wanted for arrest or questioning in the shooting because authorities in Fort Collins did not have the name of possible suspects. The first break in the case, the tracing of the handgun used in the shooting to a Florida man who said he sold it to Mr. Tafoya, did not happen until March. A warrant for Mr. Tafoya's arrest was issued in Fort Collins on April 12, 1981, according to court records.

Significant New Development Seen

Authorities in Fort Collins, according to officials there, have considered charging Mr. Wilson as a co-conspirator, but have felt they lacked sufficient evidence. These authorities said that Mr. Tafoya's presence at the farm was a new and significant development. The trial of Mr. Tafoya, who was arrested by F.B.I. agents in New Mexico on April 22, is scheduled to begin Nov. 2.

Mr. Tafoya's lawyer, Walter Gerash, said that he knew nothing about his client's having been in England, and that he had no further comment on the matter.

Mr. Wilson, a former covert agent for the Central Intelligence Agency, was indicted by a Federal grand jury in Washington last year on charges of illegally shipping explosives to Libya as part of a scheme to train terrorists there. The charges were expanded in a new indictment made public yesterday.

Mr. Wilson has refused to return repeated telephone calls placed to him in Libya.

Several Associates Visited

Residents living near the farm, which is one of two properties that Mr. Wilson owns near Haywards Heath in West Sussex, said Mr. Tafoya was one of many people apparently associated with Mr. Wilson who have stayed at the properties.

The last visitor, a Wilson business associate named John Heath, departed two weeks ago, the neighbors said. Mr. Heath, according to a former business associate of Mr. Wilson, is one of the American ordnance experts Mr. Wilson recruited in 1978 to build terrorist bombs in Libya.

The neighbors said that Mr. Wilson had visited the properties only once, two years ago, but that his associates had held business meetings there. Two of the three homes are equipped with Telex machines.

The country estates, which have been offered for sale several times in recent years for a total price of about \$1 million, are substantial rural retreats that apparently form part of Mr. Wilson's base of operations in England. The other part is a London office that serves as the English headquarters for at least five European- and African-based companies that are controlled by Mr. Wilson.

Recruitment Office in London

The London office coordinates the recruitment of American and other Western pilots and aircraft mechanics who have been flying and maintaining Libyan Air Force aircraft since at least 1980, according to associates of Mr. Wilson.

Federal investigators say Mr. Wilson moved his base of private business.

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operations from Washington to Europe and Libya beginning in about 1978. He left Government employment in 1978, according to American intelligence officials. That was the year he and another former C.I.A. employee, Frank E. Terpil, concluded a contract with Colonel Qadafi to sell to Libya their expertise in intelligence, arms and explosives. Mr. Terpil, also a fugitive, is believed to be living in Beirut.

Mr. Tafoya is said by investigators to have entered Mr. Zagallai's home in Fort Collins by pretending to be a corporate recruiter, to have shot the Libyan student twice in the head at close range and then to have fled. Mr. Zagallai survived the attack.

Purchased by Swiss Corporations

Mr. Wilson purchased the rural English properties about the same time he transferred operations abroad. Associates of Mr. Wilson who are familiar with the estates said they were purchased by two Swiss corporations that are controlled by Mr. Wilson.

According to residents of the area, the companies have invested a substantial amount of money in restoring Broxmead Farm. The farmhouse was built early in the 17th century.

The farmhouse, a Tudor-style mansion, sits at the end of a long private driveway, which itself connects to a nar-

row, winding road called Broxmead Lane more than a mile from the nearest main highway. The house is currently unfurnished and unoccupied. Nearby residents said Mr. Wilson's associates have never lived in the house.

The bungalow, which sits at the entrance to the private driveway, is a modest, two-bedroom house. Neighbors said it has been used frequently for visits by associates of Mr. Wilson, including Mr. Heath and a female companion, both of whom lived there for three months earlier this year.

Tafoya Arrived With Heath

The isolation and privacy of Broxmead Farm may have been one reason that Mr. Tafoya visited there in February. Neighbors recalled that he arrived in early February in the company of Mr. Heath, and lived quietly in the bungalow for three weeks, rarely venturing beyond Broxmead Lane. The neighbors described Mr. Tafoya as quiet and unobtrusive. They said that, apart from remaining close to the property, he showed no signs that he was in trouble or running from the authorities.

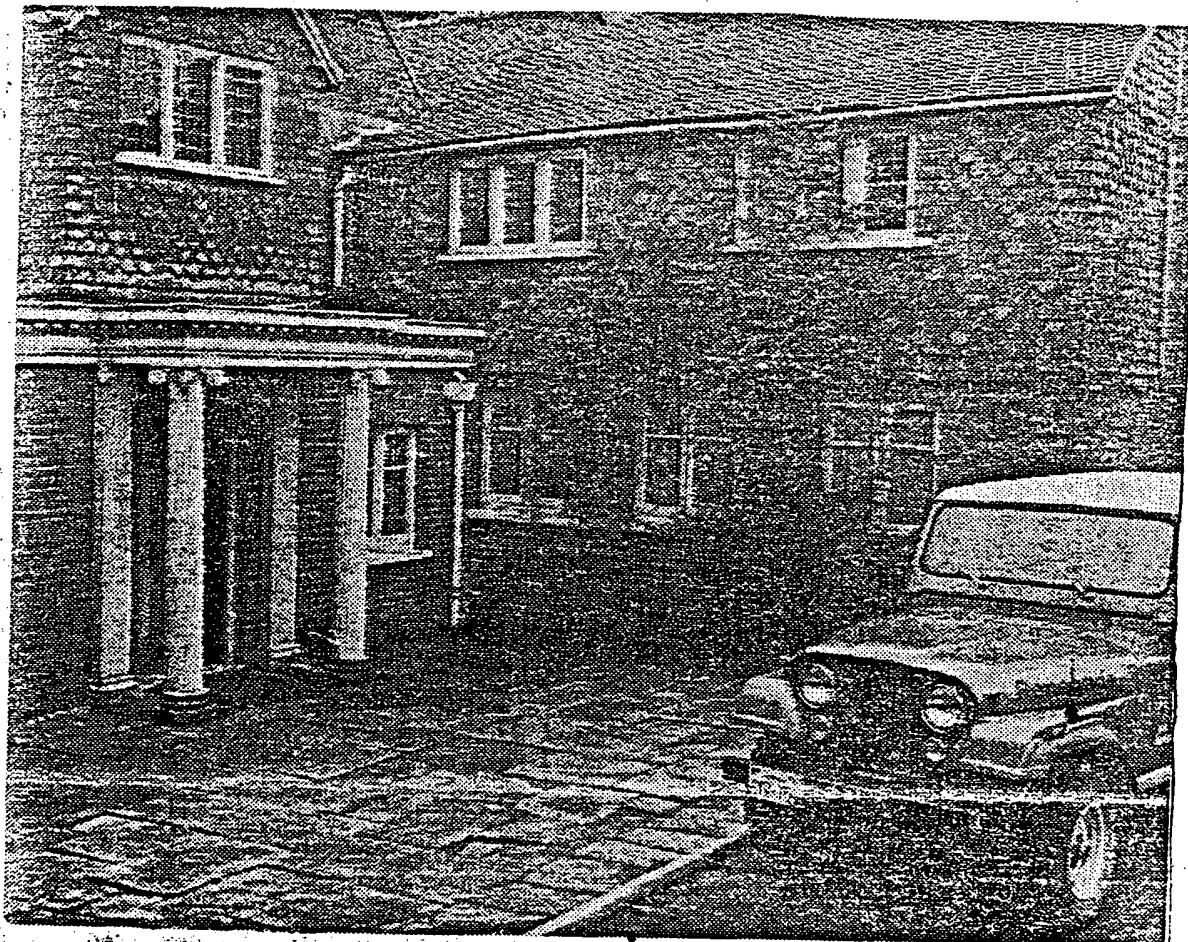
It is not known whether he visited Mr. Wilson's other estate, Staplefield Grange, about three miles from Broxmead Farm in a village called Staplefield.

Manor House Divided in Two

The grange is an old manor house, once owned by the Marquis of Reading, which was divided into two sections before Mr. Wilson purchased it several years ago. He owns the larger of the two sections, a two-story apartment that includes four bedrooms.

Unlike the farmhouse, the grange is fully furnished, including one room that contains a working Telex machine. The Telex machine at the farmhouse has not been installed.

The London company that manages the properties keeps a Jeep Renegade at the grange house for use by visitors, neighbors said. The Jeep has a current Virginia registration and, according to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, is registered in Mr. Wilson's name.



Staplefield Grange near Haywards Heath, about 35 miles south of London. It is one of two properties in West Sussex owned by Edwin P. Wilson. The Jeep bears Virginia license plates and is registered in Mr. Wilson's name.

The New York Times / Philip Taubman